30.

A Reply to a Letter

Sent By { William Newbery, AND William Edmunds } TO

Dr. FOWLER.

By *WILLIAM SMYTHIES* his Curate.

Licensed and Entered according to Order.

THere having been a very Abusive Letter Published the last week against Doctor *Fowler* (whose Eminency in the Church is well known to Wise and Judicious Men) Subscribed only by Two of his six or seven notorious Enemies; I could not, considering my great Obligations to him, let it pass unanswered, although I think that it may be slighted of all Sober Men, as it is of *him*. Their Abuses of *Me* have been so common, that I value them not; yet having this opportunity, the World shall see how much they are to blame for Reproaching *me* likewise. They tell me, that *I Study but little*; I am sure I shall not need to Study much for an Answer to their Letter.

I might in the first place descant upon their mock title [*Reverend Pastor*] which they give the Doctor, when they design to cast the greatest Reproaches upon him. But I will let that pass, with all their rude Language, knowing they are the best Expressions they have to shew how much they honour our Function.

I will keep close to Matters of Fact, and not *render reviling for reviling*. They first Charge the Doctor for *bearing hard upon them from the Pulpit*, which only proceeds from their Guilty Consciences charging *them*. I would fain know how the Doctor should discharge his Duty without reproving those Vices which he observes some of his People guilty of, and secretly spreading; so that he cannot otherwise prevent the Mischief of them. But it seems they are most Galled by that which is lately sent abroad from *the Press*. And I doubt not but the *Conclusion* was as grievous to them and their Associates in the reading, as the Congregation observed it to be when they heard it, though, for very good reasons, they are silent concerning it.

I am Astonished to think how they could have the Face to mention that *Certificate*, and Confess the *Trapan*, with which the Doctor charges them. They say, That *a great Man* told them, *It would shake the credit of their Loyalty*: And I suppose it was the same *Great Man*, to whom they accus'd him soon after. But whatsoever they pretend, it appears, they had too great an opinion of their Loyalty to desire his *Certificate* concerning it. All Men may see that they desired it on purpose, that they might be credited in the Stories with which they endeavoured to do him the greatest Mischief; and that they might not be thought to be acted by ill-will against *Him*, who had given them such an undeserved Character. It follows, *And so we laid it aside, as a thing we were not proud of*. It was time for them to lay it aside, when they had obtained what they designed by it. But though they say, they *were not proud of it*; yet (to my knowledge) they refus'd to part with it, when the Doctor would have retrieved it. Let all Men judge what name they deserve for the requital which the Doctor had, for being so ready to Certify for *Loyal-Men*, when they could not have endeavoured to do him greater Mischief if they had received his Denial. It is likewise observable, That as they afterwards make a Certificate for Mr. *W.* which the Doctor never gave him; so they make such a one for themselves. They say, that *He certified they were peaceable and Christian-like spirited men*: Whereas he only Certified, that *for ought he knew* they were such Persons. Which words

were of their own penning, as the Doctor hath told them in his Preface.

They do in the next place oblige the Doctor by ſpeaking truth: for they ſay, that *His Opinion is much altered ſince he gave them that Certificate:* And all Men in City and Country would wonder at him, if his Opinion were not altered from that time to this. But before I proceed farther, I muſt ingenuouſly confeſs, That I was the occaſion of his being ſo impos'd upon by them, and that the Character which I had given of them, over-rul'd his ſuſpition of their being otherwiſe. I hope I have his Pardon, being a true Penitent for it.

As to the *Satyrs*, *Invectives*, and *Comminations*, which, they ſay, the *Doctor* hath vented againſt them in the Pulpit; Let the Congregation judge whether he be not Egregiouſly Slandered, unleſs his general expoſing of the damnableneſs of the ſin of *Malice* and *Ill-will* before the Sacrament, which is adminiſtred every *Sunday*, be Satyrs, Invectives, and Comminations againſt *them*.

They Appeal to all that know them, and to their Conſciences alſo, That *They never oppos'd the Doctor out of ill-will to his Perſon, but only to put a ſtop to his Latitudinarian Deſigns and Practices by a due courſe at Law.* And I will undertake, That the *Doctor* ſhall joyn with them in this Appeal *to all that know them*, and are not of their Party, and to *their own Conſciences too*, whether they have not been for above a Year and half acted by the greateſt *Ill-will* to him. And whereas they pretend, That their deſign was only to put a ſtop to his *Latitudinarian Deſigns and Practices* (which word they underſtand as well as I do their *Welch* Rhyme) I Challenge them, if they dare, to declare the leaſt Proof of his being Guilty of ſuch Deſigns and Practices. They cannot forget, that Sir *Thomas Exton* declared to them, in his Court, That *They had not made the leaſt Proof of any Accuſation they had brought againſt him.* And much leſs can they forget, that Sir *Richard Lloyd* declared the ſame to them in *His* Court, before a great Number of People on *Wedneſday* laſt. And, whereas they talk of their proceeding againſt the *Doctor in a due courſe of Law*; Their many Journeys made on that account, Proclaim the Hypocriſy of this pretence, as the *Doctor* knows by ſad Experience.

As to the Certificate which the *Doctor* gave to Mr. *W.* they ſay, that *He repreſented him as a truly Loyal and a Conformable Man.* But I am Aſtoniſhed at their Confidence, conſidering, He did not Certify one title for him, more than that he was a *Conſtant attender upon the Prayers, and a frequenter of the holy Communion, according to the Order of the Church, and forward to publique good Works in the Pariſh.* The Truth of which, I am ſure they cannot deny. But they Accuſe him of *antique Geſtures*, in the time of Prayers. But the *Doctor* is Confident they Slander him. It is more to be ſuſpected, That they who thus Accuſe him, come to the Prayers, rather to be *Spyes* upon others, than to be Devout themſelves. The Doctor hath obſerv'd him ſo Reverently and Piouſly affected at the Communion, that he ſeldom receives it without wet Eyes. They accuſe him of being a *Diſſenter*, till he was *Church-Warden*; but I am able to teſtify the contrary: For I had often given him the *Sacrament* before that time, and do really think, that he was a frequenter of the Church about two Years before; and then too, when the *Conventicles* were undiſturbed, and had the greateſt Liberty. But they ſay, That he was a Souldier under Colonel *Hacker*; which the *Doctor* or I never knew of; but, it ſeems, 'tis true: Yet, if his Enemies had been ingenuous, they ſhould have ſaid, That he was likewiſe a Souldier under the Command of General *Monk*, at the time of the KING'S Reſtauration. Methinks this, and the King's Pardon, ſhould have Diſchar'd him from being reproacht for ſuch an old Crime, by Peaceable and Chriſtian-like tempered Men. As for the other Stories, which the *Doctor* did not know of, he is ſorry if they be true; but he muſt have them aſſerted by thoſe that do not hate Mr. *W.* before he believes them, he knowing, by Experience, how falſe the Reports have been, which have been ſpread againſt *himſelf* by the ſame Authors. If that which Men ſay in their Rage and Paſſion be true, one of theſe Men was as well a *Fifth-Monarchy*-Man, as the other was a *Rebel*; for this was told him to his Face in the *Doctor*'s preſence. But ſuppoſe he had known theſe ill things of Mr. *W.* Yet, Who can blame him for Certifying what he knew to be good concerning him? Eſpecially, when he expreſt Sorrow for what he had done, and having had ſuch Reproofs, that I really thought there would have been a great Breach between them.

The next *Paragraph* inſinuates, That Mr. *Recorder* oblig'd them to inform againſt Mr. *W.* But one of theſe two Men may very well remember, That the *Recorder* did expreſly deny it in the *Doctors* hearing, ſo that they cannot wipe off that charge of drinking

drinking to him, and ſhaking hands with him, and then making their Complaint againſt him.

What a bold Affront do they offer to the King's *Attorney General* in the next words? in that they plainly ſay, That *He was perſwaded to grant Mr.* W. a noli Proſequi, *by great and powerful Sollicitation*; and conſequently, that his Hearing the whole Cauſe, and what theſe Men could ſay againſt him, was but a Mock-buſineſs. As to that which they ſay of Mr. *W.*'s oppoſing their diſturbing of *Conventicle-houſes*: the *Doctor* profeſſes, That he never knew any thing of it, nor yet of his Behaviour in *Guild-Hall*, or his being againſt the Ringing of the Bells upon the 29*th.* of *May*, or his Ringing and making Bon-fires upon the Earl of *Shaftsbury*'s diſcharge by the Grand *Jury*, whom they call (though not out of any ill-will to his perſon) the *Doctor*'s *good lord and maſter*. And no wonder, that the *Doctor* ſhould be ſuch a ſtranger to theſe things, when he came to live in the Pariſh, but the *Lady*-day before he gave him his Certificate; but as to their calling *Shaftsbury* his *good lord and maſter*: The Doctor would have them know, That though he Officiated one Week for his Chaplain (who was his old Friend and School-fellow) in the time of his being Lord *Chancellor*, yet he was never *his lord and maſter*. And that he was ſo far from being of that Lords principles, that he hath enraged him by his plain Dealing. He adventured, very honeſtly, to declare his mind to him againſt the *Bill of Excluſion*, upon which the Earl told him, He perceived what Company he kept. He was likewiſe ſo provoked once againſt the Doctor, that he told him, *He was not worthy to ſay Grace at his Table*. I muſt alſo tell theſe Men, That a *Dignitary* of the Church of moſt Noted Loyalty, as alſo a worthy Doctor; Nay, and an eminent Prelate likewiſe, can and will Teſtify, if there be occaſion, That the Doctor had wholly Eſtranged himſelf from that Lord (whom he very ſeldom waited upon) but for their perſwaſions not to loſe all Intereſt in him, becauſe at one time or other they thought it might be improv'd to the doing ſome good Service to Loyal-Men; and 'tis known that ſo it was improved. And the *Dean of Worceſter* can ſatisfy all Men, That the Doctor when *Phanaticiſm* was moſt rampant; *viz.* In the Year 1679. Publiſhed an Anſwer to a very *Whiggiſh* Pamphlet, much cried up at that time: For the Dean ſurprized him in his Study, as he was preparing it for the Preſs.

In that which follows, they fall very heavily upon my ſelf, but *after the* Doctor *is good Manners*, and therefore I will proceed upon their return to him.

They accuſe him of making them and ſome others of his Neighbours a parcel of *Lewd, Vicious, Profane, Scandalous, Debaucht Fellowes in private Diſcourſes and publick Preachments*, as they very mannerly call his Sermons. But I am ſure I can affirm that as to his private Diſcourſes, they of all Men, are leaſt acquainted with them, and in his Preaching he hates to uſe any ſuch indecent Language. He never ſpares Debauchery nor Diſloyalty nor Phanaticiſm in his Pulpit. But when he is upon theſe Subjects he never reflects upon particular Perſons, ſo as to charge the guilt of theſe Vices upon any of his Hearers. The Auditors at *Coleman*-Street can teſtify for him, to whom he Preaches the ſame Sermons. But, to return to his private diſcourſes, he is ſo far from delighting to talk againſt his Adverſaries, that nothing hath diſcompoſed him more than when he is put upon telling of their behaviour towards him. And when he hath done it, his own Vindication was that which he inſiſted upon. He doth not deny that, out of the Pulpit, he hath charged ſome of them with other Vices beſides Malice, and is too well able to make good his Charge, the more is the pity. 'Tis confeſſed that in the *Concluſion* of his Sermon againſt *Slandering*, he intimated plainly, that thoſe who carried that dreadful falſe ſtory to the Court, which occaſioned his Preaching it, were ſome of his *Auditors*, and ſuch as ſometimes received the Sacrament from him, and I ſuppoſe they little think upon what grounds he ſaid *This*.

They ſay that the Doctor hath not *Left one Stone unturned to defame them with Perſons of Honour*. But it would have ſaved the Doctor many Pounds in his Purſe, and prevented much diſturbance to his mind, if *This* had not been their own Crime. And he tells them by *Me*, that the greateſt Defamation, they can complain of from him, is his not concealing the Barbarous uſage, which, God knows, he hath had from them. As to what follows of the *Doctors* diſparaging of them to their *Cuſtomers*: There never was any thing more falſe; for he profeſſeth, that he knows not any one Perſon that deals with them. But it may be their having themſelves ſo publiſht their reſtleſs endeavours to ruine the *Doctor* both in his Reputation and Eſtate, may have been the occaſion of loſs to them, for which they muſt blame *Themſelves*, and not *Him*.

I come now to one of the moſt ſpiteful ſuggeſtions, that malice it ſelf could have invented, *viz.* That *the firſt viſible change of* the *Doctors* Countenance and *Carriage towards* them was *upon their ſuppreſſing Six or Seven Conventicles, and after that, upon their endeavour to purge the Veſtry of ſome very ill Men.* Now, as to their ſuppreſſing of ſo many Conventicles, he cannot ſay, that ever he heard of theſe Mens Suppreſſing *One*, tho it may be they have *Many*, and there is no Divine in *England* but may as well be charged with being a *Favourer of Conventicles* as *He* may. He hath Written no leſs than four Books againſt the Principles of Conventiclers, and I never heard any with greater force of Argument, expoſe them from the Pulpit. Let that one Book of his, Intituled *Libertas Evangelica* be conſulted, which was written and Publiſhed, 1680. when the *Fanaticks* had the greateſt Liberty, and let the *Doctor* be judged of by that Book, and whether 'tis imaginable he ſhould tack about to them after they were a cruſht Party. And I wonder what any Man can imagine he can promiſe to himſelf by being a Favourer of Conventicles, conſidering his *Promotions*, unleſs it could be ſuppoſed that he loves miſchief for the ſake of it. As to their endeavour to purge the Veſtry of ill Men, they know in their Conſciences, that this was no cauſe of altering the *Doctors* Countenance towards them, but it was their telling that ſhameful untruth of him at Mr. Secretary *Jenkings* his Office, *viz.* that he was an encourager of ſuch People in the Veſtry; and I think he had little reaſon to be fond of ſuch Men as ſhould thus abuſe him. There is nothing better known in the *Pariſh*, than that he had not the leaſt hand in bringing ſuch Men into the Veſtry, and that they were choſen by the Veſtry it ſelf, and that in the *Doctors* abſence too, and he knowing nothing of it. This he made to appear very fully at Mr. Recorders Chamber, when theſe Men began to torment him; and likewiſe he expreſt in my hearing the greateſt forwardneſs to have all ſuch put out, provided it could be legally done after the Act relating to Veſtries was expired; and the Recorder was ſatisfied, that it could not be done any otherwiſe but by perſwading them to reſign their places. And let that Gentleman be asked whether the *Doctor* did not ſhew great induſtry in the management of that Affair.

As to his endeavours to hinder the Church-Wardens from preſenting *Diſſenters*; all they ſaid is ſo falſe, that he appeals to Sir *Richard Lloyd* and Sir *Thomas Exton*, whether the Contrary did not fully appear in *both* their Courts.

Whereas, they call *Cripplegate* a Sanctuary for *Phanaticks*, I am perſwaded they do not abound more *there* than in other great *Pariſhes*. And every body knows, that the Greatneſs of *Pariſhes* is a ſufficient encouragement to thoſe *People* to take Lodgings in them, eſpecially when the Laws againſt them are put in Execution.

As to the *Doctors* giving the Sacrament to two Excommunicated perſons before Publication, which was the *only true* Article of many that were exhibited againſt him, and which he did not put them upon proving; theſe men might be abundantly ſatiſfied the laſt Wedneſday in the *Arches*, that the *Doctor* had all the reaſon in the world to believe, that he did *Well* in doing this; And that he never uſed more prudence & caution in any thing that he ever did.

They mind the *Doctor* of ſuppreſſing an order, appointed to be publiſhed for the preſenting of all perſons that came not to the Sacrament. This was near three years ſince, and the *Doctor* did but his Duty therein, for, as the Inſtrument had no ſeal, ſo he ſatisfied his ſuperiours, the night before, that it was not fit to be read, becauſe it would ſound ſtrangely in the Church, to hear the Church-Wardens publiquely required to do a thing *impoſſible*, it enjoyning them to Preſent all that came not that *Eaſter* to the Sacrament; For if theſe men ſay true, the Communicants in the Pariſh are no fewer than 30000.

In the Concluſion, The Doctor hath a Scoff given him upon the account of two Vindications: The Firſt they twit him with, is his Book againſt *Burnet*. But doth it really Offend theſe great Church-Men, that the Doctor ſhould Write againſt ſuch a great Phanatique, and confute his mad Principles? But *that* is the buſineſs of that Book, called, *Dirt wip'd off*; which, by the way, would have been a very good Title for this Reply. The Other was his Vindication of the Demoliſhing the Picture of the Bleſſed *Trinity*, which the Doctor declar'd to have been done by the Authority of an *Act of Chapter*. But whereas they intimate, that *He could bear that in the Seal, which he accounted Idolatry in the Glaſs.* The Doctor Anſwers, that Seals are never made the Objects of Worſhip; and likewiſe, that it is very hard to diſcern what it is in the Seal. But eſpecially, that the changing of the Seal, lies not in the power of the *Dean and Chapter*.

I am now to ſpeak for my ſelf, whom they are pleas'd to ſalute by the Name of a *Grand Informer, and a Tale-bearer between the Doctor and his Pariſhioners*; and then to tell me, that *there is not a Curat in* England *that ſtudies leſs, or uſurps more upon his Neighbours.* I am ſorry they are ſo uncharitably cenſorious, as to think that I have ſo little regard to the peace of my own Mind, or that they ſhould think me ſo impolitick as to be a Tale-bearer, or the Doctor ſo unworthy as to endure it. I have been ſo far from exaſperating him againſt the Pariſhioners, or them againſt him, that I challenge all Men to produce any one Inſtance of it. Theſe very Men know that I have with all meekneſs and calmneſs, endeavoured to make them ſenſible of their Miſtakes concerning him, as well as of their ill Dealings with him. And the Doctor knows what I have done towards a mutual good Underſtanding.

That which they ſay of my ſtudying ſo little, is very diſingenuous, conſidering the Concerns of the Pariſh to be ſo great, that I cannot promiſe to my ſelf the freedom of one Hour in a day, from the neceſſary performance of my Miniſterial Offices abroad. If they could have charged me of frequenting ill Houſes, or keeping ill Company, I know they would not have ſpared the divulging of it.

I know not what they mean by my *uſurping upon my Neighbours.* I challenge them, and all Men, to produce one Inſtance of my doing any Man a wilful Injury, or denying the worſt Enemy I have any reaſonable Courteſy. It hath been a great ſatisfaction to me, when any of my Enemies have recommended poor People to me, that, by my relieving of them, it might appear I had no Piques againſt any Man, but that whatever I ſaid which might offend them, proceeded from the diſcharge of a good Conſcience.

That which follows next, relates to my *Sermons upon Reſtitution*, and the occaſion of them; in which they caſt a very falſe Aſperſion upon me.

The true Account of that Buſineſs is as followeth.

About nine Years ſince, I was deſir'd to viſit a poor Man who was dying of a Conſumption. He deſir'd my Prayers, and that I would give him the Sacrament. Upon examination of his paſt Actions, he acknowledged that he had exceedingly wronged a great many Trades-men, but had nothing to reſtore, having very little beſides the Bed he lay on. I deſir'd him to ſend to the injur'd Perſons his Confeſſion, and beg their Forgiveneſs. To which he replied, that if he ſhould tell them what he had done, they would tear him out of his Death-bed. I proffer'd to ſecure him from his Fears, promiſing, That if he were arreſted, I would take care of Bail for him, for I knew that Death would bring the firſt Execution. I was very deſirous to viſit thoſe whom he had wronged, and to treat with them on his behalf; but he would not diſcover them. I was ſo tender of him, becauſe of his deſire to receive the Sacrament, that I conſulted with two of the moſt eminent Divines in the City; who were of opinion that I ought not to give it him; and ſoon after he died without receiving it.

Upon this, I confeſs, it was that I preached upon Reſtitution: but whereas they ſay that I was offended at the poor Man, I do not know that ever I ſaw him before that time; nor do I remember that he gave me the leaſt occaſion of offence, nor was it poſſible for me to take any from a Man in that condition. And whereas they ſay, that I *denounc'd Damnation againſt Uſury, Extortion, and Oppreſſion*, the World ſhall ſhortly judg of it; for I have a Treatiſe of *Reſtitution* now in the Preſs, which contains all that I ſaid in the Pulpit, (as any Man may judg, by comparing the Book with my Notes) with a very large Addition to it; and I pray God it may do as much good as the Sermons did.

I know no reaſon they have to compare me to *Muggleton*, or to tell me of damning People from the Pulpit. The Subjects of Charity, the Sacraments, and Inſtructions of Youth, are thoſe which I have chiefly inſiſted upon; and I am ſure they cannot ſay, that I chooſe Texts on purpoſe to preach Damnation, for they know my uſual way is, to proceed in a Chapter from Verſe to Verſe; and they cannot accuſe me of fixing upon any that might lead me into ſuch Diſcourſes. If any ſerious religious Perſon ſhall tell me wherein I am to blame in my Sermons, I will thank them, and amend; but in the mean while, the frequent Thanks which I have had from dying Perſons for my Sermons, (how broad and coarſe ſoever they are) are ſuch an encouragement to me, that a thouſand Revilers ſhall never trouble me.

But now comes my great Charge: By my *Slanders and Calumnies* (they ſay) *I have diverted the Charity of divers good Benefactors, and gotten the Mony into my own hand, of which I give no account.*

In the firſt place; I would know to whom it is that I muſt give the Account? And when they have told me that, I will produce it, and ſhew how I have diſpos'd of all that ever came into my hands, for I have the Perſons Names and Places of abode. If Authority commands it, or any Benefactor deſires it, I am ready to give them ſatisfaction. But I ſuppoſe theſe Men know that there was a moſt vexatious Conteſt (carried on at the Charge of the Poor) before I came to the Pariſh; which diſcouraged Benefactors (as well it might) from giving Mony into the Officers Hands. And yet my diſpoſing of that which was committed to my Care and Conſcience, hath been the occaſion of ſuch Fewds and Malice, as I hope the World cannot parallel. They need not be ſo much offended at me now, for the great Benefactors are dead, by whoſe Charity, I am ſure, I have kept ſome hundreds from periſhing, and I have comparatively, but very little to diſpoſe of.

Whereas they charge me of *Calumnies:* All that they can truly alledge is, That I did ſeverely reprove thoſe who imbezell'd the Poors Mony in Drinking-meetings; and that miſpent ſome hundreds of Pounds of Donation-mony, given by deceaſed Benefactors: The truth of which I am yet able to teſtify, and do wiſh that it may be referr'd to the Commiſſioners for Charitable Uſes, whether I have been blameworthy.

They charge me of encreaſing the number of the Poor, by bringing them out of other Pariſhes into theirs. To which I Anſwer, That when they can bring the Officers of other Pariſhes to tell me, that their Poor are decreaſed by my means, I will give credit to them. If theſe Men knew what belong'd to ingenuity, they would have acknowledged, that as I have received ſeveral Sums into my own hands, ſo I have procured ſome hundreds of Pounds (by publick Collections) to be paid into the hands of the Officers, more than they received before I came into the Pariſh.

My next Accuſation is, my *Project of a Nurſery for poor Children.*

'Tis very true, that I had ſuch a Project, and there was a greater number that I took care of than they mention. And had it not been for the peeviſh and envious Diſpoſitions of ſome People, it had been one of the greateſt Advantages to the Pariſh that ever they received.

I proffer'd to make it appear, that I took off Eighty Pounds Charge from the Pariſh in one Year; and conſidering how many Perſons of Quality, and others, have ſent to me ſince to take off Children; I am ſure there had been but very few, except thoſe that are very little Ones, but had been well diſpoſed of. Thoſe Children who were fit to work, were employed, becauſe I knew that it was in vain to put them to School, who muſt be taken from it, and put to Trades, before they could know their Letters; but the Younger were kept to Learning, and ſome of them made good proficiency. Whatſoever Mony I took for them, I laid out in Clothes and Proviſions, and never truſted their Nurſes, leſt they ſhould want. 'Tis true, that I took the Pariſh Pay, becauſe I knew that Benefactors did not give me Mony to diſcharge *their* Rates. Whoever took notice of them as they went to Church, knew they were Clothed by my *Care*, but not at my *Charge*; and I would fain know whether the Children ſhould not go to Church becauſe of that notice? It ſeems I am obliged to them, for not accuſing me of appointing the Nurſe to hang a Clog upon ſome Children that were unruly, which I thought might reclaim them without being beaten.

But there is a very wicked Suggeſtion at the end of that Paragraph, That *ſome of them dying, it was not thought convenient to give the Searchers the view of them.*

To which I anſwer; That I never concerned my ſelf about Searchers; it was their own fault if they did not do their Duty. The two Children they mention, died (about 7 Years ſince) of Conſumptions; and I am told, by the Nurſe, that one of them was not ſearch'd, which I knew nothing of. I think it was a Child that was little leſs than an Idiot, for which I had great pity; and I do not believe that it ever received the leaſt ſtroke after it came to my Care. They talk of a Court of Juſtice, and one of them ſaith, that there is *Affidavit* made before one or more Juſtices of the Peace, that the Child was not ſearch'd. It may be they intend, when the Nurſe and others that can teſtify concerning the Child's Death are dead, to try if they can fix an Accuſation againſt me, by which they may try me for my Life. It was very well, that at the end of this Paragraph they did not think of ſaying, they had no Malice or Ill-will againſt me, as they ſaid elſewhere concerning the Doctor.

In

In ſhort, I deſire no bleſſing from the great God of Heaven and Earth, (whoſe Miniſter I am) to my ſelf and numerous Family, but according to my faithfulneſs in that which hath been committed to me for the Poor. Nor do I deſire that my own dear Children, when I am dead, ſhould ever be committed to the Care of thoſe who will be more tender and faithful than I was to the poor Children. It was great ſatisfaction to me, not long ſince, to hear that one of my Enemies ſaid, he believed, That I endeavoured, by my Preaching to ſave Mens Souls. And that another, when he took occaſion to revile me, ſaid, That he believed I was faithful in the diſtribution of other Mens Charity.

The next Paragraph, deſires *the Doctor, as he values his Credit, and theirs, not to be led* (by me) *into uncharitable Miſtakes.* I do not think the Doctor is very ambitious that his Credit and Theirs ſhould be Companions. But it ſeems that his Miſtakes are uncharitable by my means. How far I have been from doing ill Offices, I have already mentioned, and I am ſure, if need be, the Doctor's Death-bed will acquit me from any ſuch Guilt. But it is an odd conceit, that they ſhould charge him of uncharitable Miſtakes: As if ſuch a ſhameful Proſecution, as I believe was never heard of in any Age, their putting him to ſo vaſt a Charge, for doing what he did, by the beſt Advice and Direction, (which theſe Men acknowledge they did believe) and what many other Miniſters had done by the like Advice: Their diſregarding our Saviour's Command, of telling him his Fault in private, and falling upon him on a ſudden and unexpectedly, *was in kindneſs to him and his Family*; and he would have taken it ſo, if his Curat had not led him into an *uncharitable Miſtake*. 'Tis mighty probable!

Then it follows, *Curats do not behave themſelves ſo in other Pariſhes; and it is hard for* Cripplegate *to be the only Curat-ridden Pariſh in* London. I can ſcarcely forbear a merry Anſwer to this. The Curat was a Rector many Years in a conſiderable Living, where he hath the reſpect of all the Pariſh to this day. And he was a Curat in a Pariſh in *London* before he came to *Cripplegate*, in which he heartily concern'd himſelf for the Poor, and yet the Pariſhioners were not offended at him, unleſs it were for leaving them: But it ſeems *Cripplegate* is Curat-ridden. I do not think there is one of many hundreds that will join in that complaint. It is a Pariſh for which he hath a moſt ſincere Affection, and will have till his Death, if he ſhould remove to morrow, and never come more into it. But I muſt ſay, if one of them be ridden, it is the Curat, for I am ſure he is very lean, and tires almoſt every day under his Burden, tho he is very far from repining at it. But theſe Jockeys cannot be contented, unleſs they ride the Curat and the Doctor too.

There is one notorious Falſhood which came late into their Minds, as appears by their placing it: That I concern'd my ſelf in the choice of *Common-Council Men*; which I once before denied in Print, and now do it the ſecond time, and challenge any Man, that uſeth to ſpeak Truth, to charge me of one word that ever I ſpake to any Man by which it might appear. This is as true, as that *I ſold the Keys of Pews in the Church*, which never entred into my thoughts. Or, that I loſt the favour of the Biſhop of *Gloceſter*; whereas he was pleaſed to ſend many miles for me to attend him upon his Death-bed, and preach his Funeral Sermon. Or, that I was parted from my Wife; which the ſuppoſed Penman of the Letter, with others, was pleas'd to publiſh, when there was not the leaſt abſence, nor ſo much as one angry word, that might be the occaſion of that Report. And I do bleſs God for it, few were ever united in that Relation, who delight more in the Society of each other. I might mention a great many more, but that I am ſo us'd to be ſlandered by theſe, and a few other ſuch Men, that my Innocency will not ſuffer my Memory to ſtand charged with them.

There is one thing I omitted in its due place, *viz.* That the Church-Wardens who refuſed the Oath, were of the Doctor's bringing in, is as great an untruth as ever they told: for the Doctor profeſſeth, that, as to the beſt of his remembrance, he never held up his hand for any one Church-Warden; ſo he ſpoke to no one to give his Voice for either of theſe; and that he never *heard* of *one* of them, before he was nominated for the Office, nor remembers that there was one word of Objection then againſt him. But as for the *other*, whereas they ſay he never received the Sacrament before he was excommunicated, the Doctor declared in the Court that 'tis falſe, and that for about, or above a year before, he ſeveral times received it at *his* hands, and that he took him for as honeſt a Man as any in the Pariſh, tho he had once been a Diſſenter.

Another thing worthy to be obſerved, is, That one of theſe Men, *viz.* Mr. *N.* never made it his endeavour to get the Veſtry purged, till it was carried againſt the admitting of *him*; and then immediatly he beſtirred himſelf to be revenged upon thoſe who, he was told, were for keeping him out; ſo far was his pretended zeal for the Government, the Motive by which he was acted in ſo doing. And when he and his Companion went about to get Hands to their *Petition*, they never acquainted the Doctor with it. And whereas, they call the Ill Men of the Veſtry the *Doctor's Party*; as he was ever impartial, and would ſide with no Party againſt the reaſon of his Mind, as he hath declared to them; ſo he ſtifly oppoſed that Party that oppoſed Mr. *N*'s being a Veſtry-man, (they know likewiſe that I was extreamly troubled at it); and this was the only ill Thing, if it were ſo, that the worſt of them ever did in the Veſtry in the Doctor's Time. But as for him, whom he now makes the very *worſt of* theſe Men, no Man was for a long time greater with him than *he* was. In ſhort, I deſire it may be taken notice of, that the Doctor declared in the Court, laſt Wedneſday, *That if good proof could be made, of his ſhewing undue Favour to any one Diſſenter, he will forfeit his Living of S.* Giles Cripplegate. And further he declares, That there is no Diſſenter in his great Pariſh, he can call to Mind, to whom he is obliged for the worth of one Farthing, except one who gave him once a Book, and a Trifle not worth refuſing, but never deſired the leaſt kindneſs of him. And he believes there is no Divine in *London*, from whom the Diſſenters of his Pariſh do more eſtrange themſelves, than thoſe of *Cripplegate* have ever done from him. And he is confident, that hardly two of them come at him in a Twelve-month, upon any other Account, than the Buſineſs of Conformity.

I will conclude with a few words of Seaſonable Advice.

1. Let no Man charge the ill-dealings of theſe Men with the Doctor, upon the Pariſh of S. *Giles Cripplegate*; for I verily believe, that where he hath *one* Enemy, he hath a *thouſand* Friends in it. It hath in one reſpect prov'd well for him, in that he hears every day, how great numbers of his People (ſuch as cannot be accuſed of Diſloyalty or Phanaticiſm) are enquiring for his happy deliverance out of his Enemies hands. I do not think that any Miniſter could be more happy in the Love of his Pariſhioners, than he would be, if *ſix* or *ſeven* Men lived elſewhere.

2. Let none be diſcouraged from Conformity to the Orders of the Church. I hope ſuch vexatious Perſons being in her Communion, will not hinder the Compliance of thoſe that have diſſented. Thanks be to God, there are a very great number of very pious Church-of-*England* Communicants in the Pariſh of *Cripplegate*, whoſe Communion may be very delightful to all good Chriſtians.

3. Let every one conſider the unhappy Conſequence of Miſcarriages in Pariſh-Affairs. Few Miniſters ever came to the Service of a Pariſh more deſired than I was. Few Miniſters have been more ſerviceable to any Pariſh, than I have been to this; and I am ſure, no Miniſter could ever come with greater deſire to do Good. But the vexatious Conteſts, which were carried on at the Charge of the Poor, and continued after my coming: The miſimploying the Poors Mony, by which many Donations of deceaſed Benefactors (of which I do not charge theſe Men) are utterly loſt, were Things which I could not forbear ſhewing my abhorrence of: And *That* hath occaſion'd ſuch an hatred againſt me, as hath put ſome few Men, for the ſpace of ten Years, upon all endeavours of being injurious to me; and now to the Doctor for my ſake. But I can eaſily look at the Providence of God, and acknowledg that theſe things are good for me. For my Labour (though every one knows it to be great) is ſo pleaſant to me; the Opportunities of doing good ſo delightful; and the great Reſpect of the Doctor on the one hand, and of an Attentive and Pious Congregation on the other, ſo encouraging, that my *Cup* would be too ſweet, if God did not permit my cauſeleſs Enemies a little to embitter it. How long theſe things will continue, I cannot tell, nor what Enemies there are that deſign the next Miſchief. However, I am reſolved to publiſh no more ſuch Vindications, and that in Obedience to my Superiors, who think what is publiſhed, more than was neceſſary, for the clearing of their Reputations, whoſe Behaviour and Converſations are too well known for their good Names, to be made conſiderable Sufferers by theſe Men; who have made themſelves to be taken notice of by nothing ſo much, as by their great Enmity and Ill-will to them.

They have of late had too much leiſure from their honeſt Callings; and it is to be hoped, that there will ſhortly be that increaſe of Trade, which will find them other Buſineſs, than to be vexatious and reproachful to their Miniſters, who would be glad to hear of the change of their Natures, and that they take more care of the Salvation of their Souls. I can, and do call God to witneſs, that I ever had a ſincere kindneſs for theſe Men; and that from a true reſpect to them, it hath grieved me to ſee theſe Miſcarriages: But I will never be afraid, in my Sermons, to ſhew the Evil of any Sin which I ſee prevailing, tho it ſhould offend all the Friends I have in the World. It would be an unſpeakable ſatisfaction to me, if they, and ſome others, would conſider what cauſeleſs Enemies they have been to the Doctor, and do that which may tend to a hearty Reconciliation, which they know he hath exceedingly endeavoured.

This, and all Happineſs to them, is unfeignedly deſired by

Decemb. 14. 1685. *W. SMYTHIES.*

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